

**Appendix E to the Report of the third session of the**

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**COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

**Rome, 24-30 April 1968**

**Address by Rear-Admiral W. Langeraar**



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**  
**Rome, 1968**



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REAR-ADMIRAL W. LANGERAAR

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ADDRESS BY REAR-ADMIRAL W. LANGERAAR  
Chairman, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

Mr. Chairman,

You will allow me to begin this speech with the statement that I felt at the same time disturbed and honoured by the invitation extended to me by Mr. Jackson, on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, to address this Third Session of the Committee on Fisheries.

It is clear that the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) considers it to be an honour that its chairman was invited to deliver the opening address at this FAO Committee on Fisheries Session and I can assure you I share this feeling. I am glad and proud to be given this opportunity to lay down before you some outlines of international co-operation in oceanic research and submit for discussion future modes of co-operation and shapes of things to come.

I felt disturbed because Mr. Jackson, in his letter, wrote me that it has become the practice of the Committee on Fisheries to invite an eminent authority in a field related to fisheries and/or marine science and its applications to address the opening assembly of each Committee on Fisheries Session. My first impression was he had made a ghastly mistake because I do not consider myself to be an authority in any of these fields. Being a career naval officer I belong to that rare species of seagoing men regarded by the Merchant Navy as hardly qualified to go to sea and by the marine research community as not being scientific at all.

That I, notwithstanding, accepted Mr. Jackson's invitation is because he went on in his letter suggesting that my address be on the general topic of international co-operation in ocean research, taking into account the special experience of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in this regard and the special interest of the members of the Committee on Fisheries in the living marine resources and their inter-relationships with the environment. It is exactly this aspect of marine research, the necessity to cooperate, the organization of co-operation and collaboration that is near my heart. It is an aspect that today is as important as marine research itself, if not gradually developing into a prerequisite to most of that research. It is therefore that I started this address saying that I am glad and proud to be asked to say something on this subject.

The oceans and their living and mineral resources are the common interest of all mankind; the multitudes that inhabit our earth today and that are turning toward the oceans for food, minerals, fresh water, recreation and other things in ever-increasing numbers. If we then realize that most of the inhabitants of our earth are still to be born, it becomes apparent that the expression "common interest of all mankind" has a much deeper significance than would be fathomed by this wording.

This realization implies that it requires new modes of peaceful co-operation, new concepts of international law, new notions of mutual assistance as well as the willingness to co-operate and to obey international law, in order to be able to see to it that future generations will not stand at the shores of an empty sea, polluted beyond recovery, cursing their forefathers who were unable to take the necessary decisions when there still was time to move, to act and to prevent.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF CO-OPERATION

Before coming to the organization of co-operation it is worthwhile to consider the philosophy of the matter. In general two persons, two communities or two nations will co-operate when they expect or foresee that their united action will be more profitable than the sum of their individual actions would be, or when they may expect to be able to achieve in unison what would be denied them when acting separately. This, as we all know, is the main motivation for co-operation.

The problem becomes more complex already when the greater profits as a result of co-operation will not go directly or only partially to the individual partners, but mainly to the larger community to which these partners belong. This problem tends to increase and to become more difficult to solve as the co-operation necessary to attain the greater good for the larger community takes on the character of a sacrifice for the individual partner.

Your community perhaps more than any other knows the despair of the failure to reach effective agreements to protect and at this moment to save the blue, the sperm and other whales; you fisheries experts know better than anybody else the difficulties implied convincing a nation capable of an annual catch of 2000 blue-whale units to make the sacrifice of restricting itself to a catch of not more than 800 units for a future common benefit and the conservation of the stock. Where we could have lived on the interest we have also depleted the principal, the capital sum, and are left with little more than the realization that we failed miserably, failed either to see the writing on the wall or to read it and act accordingly when there still was time.

In my opinion this brings us to the heart of the problem. It is not difficult to convince one's government of the necessity of co-operation as long as one has a water-tight case proving that the spoil exceeds the toil. But the opposition stiffens appreciably when it becomes clear that part or all of the profits as a result of co-operation remain outside the sphere of direct national interest, in other words when the pain exceeds the gain. Because we must realize that real co-operation means the loss of part of one's freedom of action, part of one's autonomy and in our case also means putting part of one's ship capability at the disposal of a non-national body for the pursuance of a supra-national plan, the merits of which sometimes may escape the national field of vision. In short, co-operation will cost money, manpower and material and from a purely national point of view the advantages may be questionable, even if the benefits for a greater community are recognized. And this is exactly the crux of the matter—our inability not to see, but to act outside the sphere of our national interests.

The same reasoning, perhaps to a lesser extent, also holds good regarding inter-governmental or international bodies, agencies and institutions, all of whom have their special fields of interest, sometimes jealously guarded. There, also, a certain reluctance can be felt regarding the concept of inter-agency co-operation for fear of losing part of one's freedom of action or part of one's field of interest. Here too the lesson must be learned that the willingness to sacrifice part of the vested rights is a prerequisite, not for a leap in the dark, but for any leap forward in perfect unison with those who strive for the solution of the same types of problems.

The challenge of the problems that confront us lies in the necessity that we, persons, communities, nations, agencies, will have to change our preferences, will have to accept willingly preferential viewpoints - not necessarily the ones we were brought up with - that will make unrestricted co-operation possible and fruitful and thereby will make it possible to live peacefully together in this world that grows more technical decade after decade. For me it was revealing to see the striking similarity between the philosophy of international co-operation and the philosophy of world peace. Though this may be considered to lie outside the scope of my address today, I cannot withstand the temptation to dwell on the concept of peace for a short while because, as you will perceive, peace and co-operation are very much inter-related.

If we have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to change our preferences, we then can ask ourselves the question at what we should aim our thinking and our activities. In its simplest form the answer to this question is: "At the things that have top priority". I think you will all agree if I state that the world today has only one top priority aim: PEACE. Peace is the ultimate prerequisite for all the work to be carried out by our ocean-oriented community and it is astonishing to see how much international and inter-agency co-operation within our community may contribute to secure peace.

I hope to be able to show you how. The concept of peace is meaningless in the absence of human beings, it becomes a meaningful concept when the multitudes live together. It therefore is based on actions, behaviour and foresight of mankind and I have tried to bring these foundations together as the Seven Pillars of Peace.

To the best of my knowledge these are:

1. Mutual trust and diminished ideological controversies regarding different systems of government
2. Establishing and developing a supra-national system of law and order
3. The subordination of national power and autonomy (without injuring the human rights) to a supra-national system of law and order once established
4. A diminishing gap between rich and poor, both nationally and internationally
5. Production and distribution of adequate and sufficient food for every living human being
6. Cautious and meaningful use of the earth's resources for the benefit of all mankind
7. Machinery to safeguard the undiminished use of the earth's resources by the countless generations that will come after us.

Looking at these pillars it already becomes clear where and how co-operation in the field of marine research may contribute to the construction of several of them. Apart from the first and the third pillar which are the responsibility of politically trained people supported by their governments, the marine research community is in an extremely favourable position to show the way or to assist in erecting and constructing the remaining five pillars.

As regards establishing and developing a supra-national system of law and order, it is a fact well recognized that by concerted action of our community the material substance of some of the international law of the sea may be greatly improved, even if it is equally well recognized that the drafting of such treaties should be left to legal experts. It can be said that scientific marine research sometimes is impeded because of existing treaties that do not sufficiently take into account such research, whereas on the other hand it sometimes happens that marine research is hampered because of the absence of legal provisions.

Diminishing the gap between rich and poor internationally is an activity in which many organizations are engaged or for which responsibility is felt. However, very much more is needed and especially here bundling of all available potential is of paramount importance. This gap might indeed be made narrower if a maximum of international and inter-agency co-operation could be achieved for the carrying out of regional or ocean-wide investigations, exploitation and development of living and mineral resources in the oceans, mutual assistance, marine education and training and all those further activities in which the ocean oriented community is engaged but too often in a fragmentary way. All these activities could, better than is done now, be used for the conveyance of scientific know-why and technological know-how to developing nations and the results of these activities should be made more beneficial to such nations. To achieve this a breakthrough in our preferences will be needed and new forms of international and inter-agency co-operation will have to be developed.

It is hardly polite in your midst to dwell too long on the valuable assistance that especially the Department of Fisheries and your committee can render, above what is done already, in the production of food. But here, I think, we can reap rich fruits of further and closer inter-agency co-operation and I intend to come back to that later on. Inter-agency co-operation is needed also if we are ever to reach the point where it can be said that all the earth's marine resources are used cautiously and meaningfully.

It is the urgently required machinery to safeguard the undiminished use of the ocean's wealth in the future that presents major problems. The road to reach this objective will be long and tortuous and essentially several roads are used at the moment by different agencies and bodies. The overall, the unifying, concept is still lacking. The different roads used do not converge or not quickly enough. The one broad and straight avenue must be set out and paved in order to allow the nations and numerous agencies to march shoulder to shoulder in perfect unison towards the beckoning perspective, the ultimate goal, an earth on which it will be a pleasure to live, not only for us but for ever and ever. Let us work together while there is time, lest we will be worked out later, fighting a lost cause.

This brings me to the end of my reflections on the philosophy of co-operation and the fields in which our community is active, should be active or should intensify its activities. What we need is better, deeper, honest inter-relationship and the best possible, fully co-ordinated international and inter-agency co-operation; on top of that, the willingness to accept the lesser evil to attain the greater good. Hereby not only will we widen our knowledge of the nature and resources of the oceans but at the same time we have an active part in the construction of some of the pillars that together must carry the roof of the temple of peace.

#### THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION OF CO-OPERATION

A discussion on the organization of co-operation should be divided into two parts, the present organization and possible future forms. Talking about the present organization of co-operation in marine matters we should not forget that co-operation in this field is still very young and, consequently, its organization imperfect. Our operations in the oceans started less than a century ago with the Challenger Expedition and our first attempt to organize co-operation on an international scale was made 64 years ago with the establishment of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

The great drive towards the oceans, the first really world-wide attempt to come to international co-operation with regard to marine research is only eleven years old and was born out of the International Geophysical Year. Small wonder, therefore, that the organization of international co-operation is lagging behind, is inefficient and in a state of flux. The more so as the activities in the oceans by nations, as well as by international bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations family, developed at an incredible rate. Now that international cooperation has found its preliminary



shape in a confused mixture of international bodies and specialized agencies, still far from ideal, the problem of inter-agency co-operation becomes more and more important every day.

In the eleven years that lie behind us we have seen, *inter alia*, the establishment of a Special Fund of the United Nations in 1958, the establishment in 1961 of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in UNESCO, in 1962 the Advisory Committee on Marine Resources Research not only started its work in FAO, but was also asked in 1963 to act as one of the two scientific advisory bodies to IOC. The Department of Fisheries in FAO was given departmental level only in 1966 and your Committee on Fisheries is only two years old. Now all these activities are more or less successful attempts at international co-operation on a global scale. But let us not forget the 30-odd international and intergovernmental fisheries bodies that shape international co-operation on a regional scale, or manage or protect one or several species. And let us not overlook the considerable number of similar bodies that are discipline-oriented or mission-oriented. Nor should we fail to recognize the vital interests some specialized agencies of the UN family have in the results of several of these types of co-operation in order to be able to maximize the performance of their functions.

The awesome extent and fabulous wealth of the oceans has made the organization of our ocean affairs an enormously complex matter and according to a very conservative estimate I come to a number of at least 50 organizations in which the necessity to co-operate internationally has been channeled globally or regionally, on an individual, international or intergovernmental base, ranging from pure scientific research through surveys and exploration to development and exploitation, conservation and prevention. This is the state of the art today and I need hardly add that our governments have become confused at such proliferation.

It will be clear also that no simple solution exists. On the other hand a step-by-step procedure may take too much time and time is a scarce commodity in this matter. But this procedure has the advantage to make possible simultaneous attempts at inter-agency co-operation in different sectors. Some of you will know I made a modest attempt myself when in the middle of February this year I visited your Director-General and the Assistant Director-General and Staff of the Department of Fisheries. It was my intention to try to strengthen the ties and amount of co-operation between the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Department of Fisheries.

Taking into account that a substantial amount of the knowledge of the oceans which is being acquired under the auspices of IOC is of great benefit also to FAO (Committee on Fisheries), because an important part of IOC's oceanic research deals with the composition, physical and chemical properties of the ocean environment, it was my feeling that such research would contribute to the scientific basis necessary to provide a better insight into rational exploitation of living resources of the ocean. I, therefore, suggested that a staff member of the Department of Fisheries of FAO be permanently attached to the Secretariat of IOC, with the object to take full advantage of the inherent possibilities for developing the necessary environmental and fishery studies under the present and future co-operative investigations of IOC. This is possible under the Statutes of IOC and I was very glad this proposal met with approval in principle. To make the work of this staff member as profitable as possible the Department of Fisheries came with some additional suggestions which come under the authority of UNESCO to accept. The whole matter has now reached the stage where the executive heads of the two parent bodies involved, FAO and UNESCO, consider the administrative and organizational questions of outposting a senior FAO marine scientist to Paris.

But what I said before I maintain here: "Very much more is needed". However, this is the picture that presents itself in general terms and considering the very short time we have had to organize international co-operation it is surprising to see some of the extraordinary results already obtained. The progressive experience gained in the Indian Ocean Expedition, the Investigation of the Tropical Atlantic, the Tsunami Warning System and the Co-operative Study of the Kuroshio is stimulating and the amount

of co-operation received from nations, agencies and institutions gives hope for the future. And this brings me to the last part of my address.

#### THE SHAPES OF FUTURE CO-OPERATION

On the 6th December 1966 the General Assembly of the United Nations, during its Twenty-First Session, adopted Resolution 2172, called "Resources of the Sea". This is a very important document that undoubtedly will have an impact on international co-operation, even though individual points of view ranged from "premature" to "past due" and from "nothing will change" to "the World Oceanographic Organization".

Essentially this resolution asks three things: The first is a comprehensive survey of activities in marine science and technology, including those related to mineral and living resources undertaken by any agency, institution or organization. The second is a request for formulating proposals based on the comprehensive survey, to ensure the most effective arrangements for an expanded program of international co-operation, education and training and finally the operative paragraph requests the Secretary-General to set up a small group of experts to assist him in the preparation of the comprehensive survey and in the formulation of the proposals.

The final operative paragraphs request that the survey and proposals be submitted to the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development for its comments and that survey, proposals and comments be submitted to the Twenty-Third General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

Six weeks ago the group of experts met for the second time and approved in principle the text of the survey and drafted a number of proposals based on that survey. Though these draft proposals may undergo some editorial changes at the UN Secretariat, their material substance will remain unchanged. Even if the comments of the Advisory Committee are not known yet, it seems interesting to give you some general information on the direction of thought that resulted in these proposals.

During the discussions it soon became clear that the majority of the group of experts was of the opinion that time was not ripe yet to propose the establishment of a World Oceanographic Organization. Such an organization would require substantial expenditure involving rather heavy extra contributions from states members and it was thought that many governments would not be prepared to meet heavy additional cost. Also from an organizational point of view no overriding need for a new specialized agency was felt.

It was suggested that the expanded program of international co-operation in the study of marine environment through science should be drawn up by individual scientists and that this program synthesize national and international plans in this field. Thereby it would enable governments and international bodies to take cognizance of each other's plans, to adapt them as necessary, to avoid duplication, to ensure that gaps are filled and, co-operatively or jointly, to undertake large-scale activities in research and related services which are not feasible for a single country or for a single organization. Such an expanded program would also provide a basis for making timely and adequate provisions for finance and facilities to support the activities included in it. Something similar to the work started by the joint ACMRR/SCOR/WMO(AC) Working Group should be continued to identify specific scientific problems which require expanded international co-operation.

To formulate such an expanded program, to implement its execution, to organize the necessary activities with their administrative and other complications, to co-ordinate the needed international co-operation and to act as a focal point for the relations with other organizations concerned, a suitable intergovernmental body, preferably an existing one, was considered essential. There was also a consensus of opinion that the task of such an intergovernmental body could be taken care of by the IOC, the terms of reference of which were thought to be close to the ones required.

A broadening of the base of IOC, however, was considered necessary. Member governments, UNESCO, FAO and WMO should be asked to provide, through modification of IOC Statutes, for adequate joint financial support, for a joint secretariat and equitable participation of the agencies in organizing the Commission's work. Member governments should agree to provide appropriate direct financial support to the Commission, which funds should be usable for all aspects of the Commission's work. It was also stated during the discussions that the progress of this work would aid substantially the research relating to fishery resources and the exploitation and development of living and mineral marine resources.

The group of experts was of the opinion that the problem of fisheries development and conservation still showed considerable scope for further improvement of international collaboration, but also expressed the opinion that this could be achieved within the existing organizational framework, taking into account that the FAO Committee on Fisheries has already stimulated closer co-operation between existing bodies, has identified areas where international co-operative action is needed and has been instrumental in obtaining international agreement as well as in creating international machinery to this end.

The group of experts discussed at length the future organization of international co-operation in the field of exploitation and development of mineral resources of the ocean, the control and prevention of pollution of the sea, as well as education and training in marine sciences. I will not take up too much of your time and, therefore, will refrain from giving you an account of the view points and deliberations of the group on these matters.

For this moment it should be sufficient to say that a consensus of opinion was reached and no new agency was suggested to be responsible for the organization of international co-operation in these fields, but rather the concept of intensified inter-agency co-operation was stressed on all occasions.

Mr. Chairman,

I realize I took up too much of your valuable time already and when you allow me to sum up what I have tried to convey in this address it boils down to three things:

1. In the philosophy of co-operation my conclusion was: we need better, deeper and honest inter-relationship and the best possible, fully co-ordinated international and inter-agency co-operation, to be brought about by a change in our preferences, the willing acceptance of a new set of preferential viewpoints, enabling us to live and work peacefully together.
2. Under the present organization of co-operation it was found that a profusion of organizations add to the confusion and that, considering the short time we have had to devote our attention to the problem, remarkable progress has been made in international co-operation, but more is needed, especially in inter-agency co-operation.
3. The shapes of future co-operation, as far as we are able to discern them from the views expressed by the group of experts, all show the reluctance to create new organizations and testify to the paramount need for improved and intensified inter-agency co-operation.

Therefore, it is clear what we need. It is up to us whether we will get it. If we fail, the consequences will be disastrous. But if we have the will to persevere and get the strength to proceed in the face of misfortune and mistrust, the reward will be magnificent and the result beneficial to all mankind for many generations.

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